



# Friends of the Siskiyou County Museum

## Another Fun and Successful Walk Through History!

Our third annual *Walk Through History* was the best ever! The morning was a little crisp but it warmed up to be a beautiful clear fall day, a day filled with a variety of activities and demonstrations, good food and high quality vendors that brought out the crowds. We had 488 people sign in.

Brolly the roaming donkey was undoubtedly the star of the show. The vintage cars, live old time music and the extensive fiber arts show were all new features this year. The homemade pies were scrumptious (we sold out!), Ricky B's hotdogs sold almost faster than he could make them, the working blacksmith and the gem and mineral club were back by popular demand!

We have settled on the first Saturday in October to have *Walk Through History* from here on out. So we'll see you on October 3, 2020!



*Clockwise from top: Brolly the Denny Bar Co. donkey; vendors; vintage cars; shingle splitting; blacksmithing.*

## Museum Update

Patricia Lord, SCM Project Manager

A dedication ceremony was held for the then brand new building of the Siskiyou County Museum on August 24th, 1951. Over the past sixty-eight years the museum and the community have gone through significant changes. With the retirement of former Museum Director Lisa Gioia, the museum is embarking on a new chapter, the first page of which will involve assessment and strategic planning. In order to better serve the community, continue to preserve the museum's invaluable collections, and understand, interpret, and present the fullness of our history and culture, the museum will develop a plan to identify and address areas where we can grow and improve.

The county has hired a project manager, under direction from the County Librarian Michael Perry, to gather input and create a strategic plan, addressing both short-term issue resolutions, as well as defining the long-term direction and goals of the museum. Throughout this process we will share with you updates on our progress and plans and welcome input from stakeholders.

While new and exciting changes are on their way, we are also working to reduce disruption as much as possible during this transitional period. The museum will remain open for its regular hours (Tuesday – Saturday 9am – 3pm, with the exception of county holidays). The outdoor museum will be open by prior arrangement only for the fall and winter season. Researchers are asked to call (530-842-3836) or email (scmuseum@co.siskiyou.ca.us) in advance to schedule visits to the research library so that we may ensure there is someone available to assist with requests. Additionally the museum asks that people wishing to donate objects to the collection contact us with information about the item(s) prior to bringing them to the museum.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to another sixty-eight years sharing the history and culture of Siskiyou County.

## Museum Notes



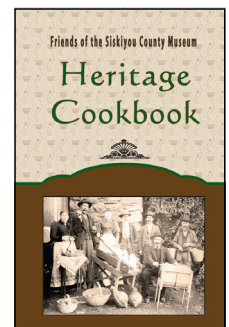
In this time of transition, there are some days when we have no county employee on site. This means that Siskiyou County Museum Friends volunteers are needed to run the museum on those days.

Are you interested in greeting visitors and staffing the Museum Store (which involves using a cash register and taking credit card payments using a Square card swiper)? If so please contact Museum Store manager Katherine at the museum (842-3836).

The Aviation Exhibit will be ready for viewing by early November. Look for an article about the exhibit in *Enjoy Magazine*.

Time to Renew your Friends of the Siskiyou County Museum membership for 2020. Only \$10 a year!

**Heritage Cookbook.** We still have plenty of cookbooks in stock. They would make great Christmas presents and cost only \$15.



### GIVING TUESDAY!

**December 3rd.** Sponsored by the Shasta Regional Community Foundation, we are able to participate for the first time this year, now that we are going on three years old! More details to follow, but this will be your chance to show your support to the Friends and to the Museum.

### We now have a website:

[SiskiyouCountyMuseumFriends.org](http://SiskiyouCountyMuseumFriends.org)  
(Please note that this is a work in progress.)



*Gems, minerals and jewelry at the Walk Through History on Oct. 5th.*

## Town signs and town arches

were a common feature in early 20th century small towns. They exhibited town pride while welcoming visitors who arrived by train or highway.

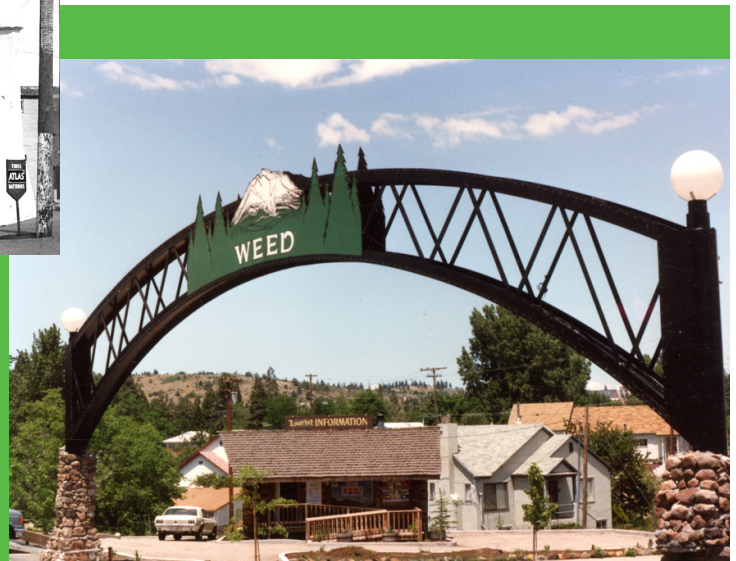
In 1917 Yreka hung an arched electric sign at the intersection of the Pacific Highway (later known as US99) and Miner Street. In the 1970s after I-5 came through, the vintage sign was given a new home at the central Yreka interchange. Joan Favero will present the fascinating tale of the Yreka sign at the Nov. 8 *Siskiyou Stories* (noon at the Museum).

Mt. Shasta city once had two welcome signs that spanned US99, one on either end of town. They were erected in 1924 after the name was changed from Sisson to Mt. Shasta. The pictured sign is the one on the south side of town.

Weed has a welcome arch that was erected in 1990. It replaced the original steel reinforced concrete "Welcome to Weed" arch built in 1922. By 1963 a few cracks had appeared in the concrete. A decision was made to tear it down, but the story is that the tear-down was an unexpectedly difficult task and probably unwarranted. Then it took 27 years of wrangling and fundraising before the 9-ton steel replacement went up. The Weed arch straddles Main Street at the one-time US99/US97 intersection.



The Story of the Yreka Sign  
*Siskiyou Stories*  
Nov. 8 @ Noon



# Siskiyou Coal Mine, A Research Library Nugget

When considering Siskiyou County mining history, coal mining does not readily come to mind. A recent research request brought to light the fact that indeed there was for a time a local working coal mine, as well as some other small coal “croppings” that were prospected here and there in the county. We were unable to find a photograph of the Siskiyou Coal Mine as requested, but still it was exciting (as a volunteer researcher) to learn something new!

I found some information in the book *The Siskiyou Coal Mine and the Search for Oil in Siskiyou County* by Cy and Sally Rippon. In the 1980s the couple self-published this and several other books such as *Mott: Once Booming Siskiyou Sawmill and Lumber Town*, *Pioneering with Electricity in Siskiyou County* and *Heydays of Ager and Other Bits of History*, all available in the research library. These books are essentially collections of old newspaper articles, all arranged chronologically and by topic, plus some commentary written by the Rippons.

As for the Siskiyou Coal Mine, the deposit was discovered in 1875 on the west side of Montague-Ager Road a few miles north of Montague. As described by the California State Mining Bureau in a 1915 publication, it had a vein of coal 5 feet wide, with 30 inches of “good grade lignite that burns freely and leaves no clinkers.” (Klinkers [clinkers] are the undesirable non-combustible elements in coal that can be left behind, also called slag.) A later publication describes the vein as up to 6 feet thick.

A *Yreka Journal* newspaper article in the Rippon book states, “Some [coal] was tried in the forge at E. Carrick’s blacksmith shop here, and is claimed to be as good for blacksmith use as the best Lehigh variety.” (Lehigh was a coal mining area in Pennsylvania.) In 1877 the coal was also tried out in the Yreka Brewery: “John tried a sack in the furnace and it made a quick hot fire, the coal emitting a smoke like the superior English coal and having an odor like tar...One sack of this coal burned in the furnace gives more heat than filling it three times with cordwood sawed in two.”

California’s small coal mining industry as a whole was early and brief, with cheaper and better quality coal being imported from the east as the infrastructure improved. Our coal was likely used only locally, Siskiyou County being so removed from the rest of the state. The coal was used for heating, blacksmith shops and steam boilers to power various equipment.



Serious development of the mine started in 1891 when a newspaper article predicted the Siskiyou Coal Mine was “destined to prove a bonanza more valuable than gold mines.” By 1903 the sloping pit was down 800 feet to take in the coal bed that dipped down at a 30° angle to the northeast. In the end, there was not enough quality coal to warrant the costs of the labor and machinery needed to extract it. It ceased operation in 1925.

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*Steve Farrington discusses some historic images of Callahan from the Museum’s collection at his well-attended Siskiyou Stories presentation in October.*

This description of an 1888 stagecoach ride up the Scott River was recently transcribed from a handwritten story in the museum files. It was written in 1946 by H. C. Chester who resided in Happy Camp at the time of writing.

## A Ride on the Scott Bar to Fort Jones Six Mule Team Stagecoach

The time I am writing about began in April 1888 when I took my first trip over the Scott [Bar] Mountains between Scott Bar and Fort Jones. There being no road through the Scott River Canyon at that time. The first horse drawn vehicle over the new road through the Scott River Canyon was in May 1891 and I was the driver, going from Fort Jones to Scott Bar. Mr. Crawford who had charge of building the bridge 11 miles from Fort Jones and the bosses in charge of the road joshed me about going over the road one day before it was officially declared open; but this was not so funny as the comedy that took place in the early days over the road from Scott Bar to Fort Jones.

This as I have said before was in April 1888. I do not know when the inception took place but I will try to tell you what took place on my first trip over the Scott [Bar] Mountains from Scott Bar to the Meamber Ranch at the lower end of Scott Valley. At the time of which I'm writing a very obliging and good natured person by the name of Whistling Davis had absolute charge of the stage route between Fort Jones and Scott Bar and perhaps more for all I knew. But he was the driver of six slick looking mules that were hitched in front of the stage coach. The reason he was called Whistling Davis was the fact that he had almost absolute control of any piece of music which a person might suggest. When he would whistle the Battle Hymn of the Republic all the mules would get in step and work their long ears forward and back.

Now before I go any farther I want to pay tribute to the early stage drivers; they were men of character, of honesty and honor and looked upon their job as a step toward civilization and took more interest in the part that they played in life than the President of the United States does today in the role he is supposed [\_\_\_\_t].

Now in April 1888 we leave Scott Bar at 5 o'clock in the morning. Nine passengers including myself and



*The Scott River stage pauses before rounding "Cape Horn," a rocky bluff area near where the Scott River joins the Klamath River.*

four women. Six mules hitched to a real to goodness double decker stage coach and the driver Mr. Davis. We crossed Scott River just out of town and then had a few miles to go before we came to Scott [Bar] Mountain. Now the road over Scott [Bar] Mountain was straight up one side and straight down the other or visa versa. Now before we got to the foot of the mountain Mr. Davis asked the passengers if there was anyone aboard who could handle six horses. Nobody could. I was riding on the top deck. He looked around at me and said: how about you kid? I told him I could drive six horses and one time I drove twenty mules in a pack train but they were loose.

He says: No fooling kid, can you drive six horses? I said I sure can. He said get over here in my seat and show me. So I did. So he said I am supposed to have someone sit by me who can handle a team in case anything should happen to the driver. Then he asked me if I could do anything else as good as I could drive six mules. I told him I could play about 100 pieces of

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## Friends of the Siskiyou County Museum

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## Schedule of Events

Nov 8

**Siskiyou Stories @ noon.** Joan Favero, The Yreka Sign

FSCM General Meeting @ 1:15.

Dec 3

### GIVING TUESDAY

Help the museum by contributing to the Friends on this special day. Details Coming Soon.

Dec 13

FSCM General Meeting @ 1:15.

### HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!

Come in for a visit, have some treats, shop at the store, check out our holiday exhibit. Details soon.

Become a  
Siskiyou Museum Traveler

BUY YOUR

Museum Passport

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music on the accordion. Then he said he would whistle for me, and asked me what kind of music I knew. I told him I knew about all the dance music; then he said he would whistle a few selections for me, and he sure could whistle.

When we got to the foot of the mountain he came to a stop and informed the passengers for the second time that they were elected to walk up the mountain as it was so steep the team could only pull the empty stage coach to the top. The women put up a big beef but he told them that the mountain was there when he first came and that he had nothing whatsoever in building the road and that they were circumstances over which he had no control.

When the passengers asked him why the kid was going to ride up the mountain he said to them; he is just one step ahead of you folks. I was 14 at the time. Well when we got to the top, there was a man up there with a big Percheron horse hauling tops of trees to hitch to the stage to keep it from running away. This man told me he had hauled everything for two miles up the ridge. There were two trees, one hitched behind the other and then hitched to the axel of the stage coach. When the driver got the passengers aboard, he told them if the trees stayed with the stage all the passengers would land in Fort Jones a little after dark; otherwise they probably would all land in Paradise. For many years after the road had been abandoned, you could find something like two miles of road near the foot of the mountain where trees had been rolled to the lower side of the road.



*This is a small fraction of the extensive fiber arts exhibit staged in the research library during the 2019 Walk Through History.*